

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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5 1. A message processing apparatus for receiving and displaying messages sent from a sending end, comprising:

reception means for receiving a message sent from the sending end;

key information extraction means for extracting key information from the message received by said reception means, the key information being contained in the message as part of attribute data thereof and used to identify a predetermined handler program relevant to the message;

program loading means for loading the 15 predetermined handler program associated with the key information; and

execution means for executing the predetermined handler program loaded by said loading means at prescribed times.

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2. The message processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the handler program provides at least one primitive process; and

25 said execution means selectively executes some of the primitive processes, depending on events that may occur subsequently to the reception of the message.

3. The message processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

5. said program loading means has a table that defines relationships between the key information and the handler programs associated therewith; and

said program loading means consults said table to select and load one of the handler programs that is associated with the given key information.

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4. The message processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the attribute data further includes a predetermined argument; and

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said execution means executes the handler program, referring to the argument.

5. The message processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

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the handler programs are stored in a distributing station; and

the message processing apparatus further comprises downloading means for downloading the handler programs from the distribution station.

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6. The message processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein:

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 said program loading means has a table that defines relationships between the key information and the handler programs associated therewith;

5 said program loading means consults the table to select and load one of the handler programs that is associated with the given key information; and

 said downloading means downloads the table, together with the handler programs.

10 7. A computer-readable medium storing a computer program for receiving and displaying messages sent from a sending end, the computer program being designed to run on a computer in order to cause the computer to function as:

15 reception means for receiving a message sent from the sending end;

 key information extraction means for extracting key information from the message received by said reception means, the key information being contained in 20 the message as part of attribute data thereof and used to identify a predetermined handler program relevant to the message;

 program loading means for loading the predetermined handler program associated with the key 25 information; and

 execution means for executing the predetermined handler program loaded by said loading means at prescribed

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AT
end
times.